

**To:** Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]  
**From:** Morning Energy  
**Sent:** Fri 12/22/2017 3:05:58 PM  
**Subject:** POLITICO's Morning Energy, presented by the Renewable Fuels Association: Disaster relief pushed even as government stays open — Cramer weighs E&C position in Senate bid calculus — Climate pages removed from Park Service site

By Anthony Adragna | 12/22/2017 10:00 AM EDT

*With help from Eric Wolff*

**PROGRAMMING NOTE:** Morning Energy will not publish from Dec. 25-Jan. 1. Our next Morning Energy newsletter will publish on Tuesday, Jan. 2.

**WAIT UNTIL NEXT YEAR:** The millions of Puerto Ricans reeling from months without electricity, Californians battling devastating wildfires and communities in Texas, Florida and the Caribbean rebuilding from a string of crippling hurricanes must wait until next year for disaster relief after Congress left town without sending funds their way. "Disaster is a lot more complicated, a lot more moving parts, a lot more varied interests, competition between various jurisdictions over who gets what," Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas) said on Thursday. It now faces the prospect of languishing for weeks, Pro Budget & Appropriations Brief's Sarah Ferris reports.

**A disaster assistance bill cleared the House** on a 251-169 vote that would have doled out \$81 billion to communities around the country. But it faced resistance in the Senate where Minority Leader Chuck Schumer demanded more help for Puerto Rico's cash-strapped Medicaid program and fixes to the GOP's tax bill, H.R. 1 (115), to prevent a disproportionate hike in taxes on the island.

**The government stays open:** Congress did okay funding H.R. 1370 (115) for federal agencies through Jan. 19 on a 231-188 House vote and a 66-32 tally in the Senate, POLITICO's Rachael Bade, John Bresnahan and Seung Min Kim report.

**\*\* A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** This week marks the tenth anniversary of the Renewable Fuel Standard, helping to provide consumer choice at the pump. The RFS has been an unmitigated success, helping to clean the air, lower gasoline prices, provide greater energy security and boost local economies. Learn more at <http://www.ethanolrfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RFS2-Ten-Years.pdf>. \*\*

**Looking to 2018:** Twelve attorneys general, led by New York's Eric Schneiderman, sent a letter to congressional leaders opposing "deep and damaging proposed cuts" to EPA's fiscal 2018 budget and urging the House not to include environmental riders as they consider spending legislation.

**NOMINATIONS CLEARED:** Before heading out for holiday cheer, the Senate confirmed three energy-related nominations by unanimous consent: Linda Capuano to run the Energy Information Administration; Timothy Petty to be assistant Interior secretary for water and

science; and John Vonglis to be chief financial officer of the Energy Department. The chamber also cleared four nominations to the Tennessee Valley Authority.

**Try again:** It appears the White House will have to renominate Susan Combs to be Interior's assistant secretary of policy management and budget, and Ryan Nelson to be agency solicitor. Their forced do-overs come in addition to Kathleen Hartnett White, who as expected must be renominated to run the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

**Bills, bills, bills:** Senators passed legislation S. 1447 (115), reauthorizing the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act, which helps retrofit diesel-powered equipment; S. 2030 (115) delaying the compliance date for efficiency standards for ceiling light kits into 2020; and H.R. 518 (115) exempting certain devices from energy conservation standards for external power supplies.

**IT'S BEGINNING TO FEEL A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS!** I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and a sincere thank you for spending so many of your mornings this year with me delving through the ins and outs of the energy world! Ogilvy's Tony Bullock identified Wisconsin Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner as the second longest-serving House member. And for your last trivia question of 2017: What nearby world leader's birthday is Christmas day? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to [aadragna@politico.com](mailto:aadragna@politico.com), or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning\\_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

**HOLIDAY PRESENTS FROM ME:** You better watch out, you better not cry, ME's handing out gifts and we hope these jokes fly.

- For Lisa Murkowski, a red suit, sleigh and eight reindeer. She's gotten so much in the past two years, she should be the one delivering the gifts.

- For Rick Perry, funding to have the national labs calculate the cost of freedom

- For Scott Pruitt, 100 lawyers to help him process that ever-expanding backlog of FOIA requests.

- For Ryan Zinke, a gift certificate to the Rock Creek Park Horse Center so he never has to miss riding with VIPs (or VPs).

- For Neil Chatterjee, a signed photo of James Cromwell.

- For Jerry Brown, a lightsaber and a badge that reads, "Resistance Leader."

- For Chuck Grassley, a statue at the Corn Palace in South Dakota in recognition of his undying devotion to biofuels industry.

- For Rob Bishop, a gift for his 40th wedding anniversary coming over the holiday break (this one's real. Congratulations!).

**SEEKING A PROMOTION?** North Dakota Rep. Kevin Cramer tells ME the departures of

three senior Energy and Commerce members - [Joe Barton](#), Tim Murphy and [Marsha Blackburn](#) - may offer him a chance to move up on the panel and will factor into his decision on whether to challenge Sen. [Heidi Heitkamp](#). "It all becomes part of a formula to make a difficult decision more difficult," he said. "It's a factor that I'm considering for sure. We only have one member from an entire state. Influence matters all the more ... Whereas a new senator is a new senator even if you used to be a congressman. That is definitely part of the calculation."

**REMOVED:** More than 90 documents detailing how national parks plan to address climate change have been removed from the National Park Service's website, according to [a report](#) from the Environmental Data and Governance Initiative. The bulk of the removals happened in early December and users must now request copies of the climate action plans by email. Among the documents axed were those detailing what "parks are doing to respond to climate change and move park operations in a more sustainable direction" at such landmarks as Glacier, Everglades, Joshua Tree and Grand Canyon national parks.

**THAT CARBON MAY BE CAPTURED, BUT DON'T LET IT GO:** The carbon capture tax credit expansion in the tax extender bill released Wednesday won bipartisan praise, but some Democratic senators are concerned about a separate provision in the bill to reduce monitoring requirements on carbon once it's in the ground. One Senate Democratic aide said the provisions, which would relieve oil companies from tracking CO2 leakage once they use it, could serve "as a poison pill for many Democrats in the coalition of cosponsors, and an aide to another Democratic senator said, "the language is a non-starter." Whether the monitoring issue is enough to drive off Democrats who may like the bill's other measures, like tax credits for energy efficient homes and commercial buildings, remains to be seen. "There are members on the D side, particularly, who think that if you are getting a tax credit for something you ought to demonstrate that you're doing what you ought to be doing to get the credits," said Kurt Waltzer, managing director of the Clean Air Task Force. "I think people take that seriously."

**SCIENTISTS SUE:** A coalition of doctors, scientists and other groups filed [a lawsuit](#) Thursday asking a court to throw out Pruitt's [directive](#) barring anyone receiving agency grants from serving on its various advisory panels. They argue Pruitt's action violates federal ethics rules and is arbitrarily biased toward individuals with industry ties. "There are already procedures in place to avoid a potential conflict-of-interest among advisory board members, which makes this latest effort seem to be more about stacking the board with members who will support the new administration's deregulatory agenda," Robyn Wilson, one of the professors booted off the Science Advisory Board, said in a statement.

**BISHOP WANTS CONGRESSIONAL SCRUTINY OF PARK FEES:** Interior should not be able to unilaterally raise admission fees for national parks and should come to Congress annually to seek approval, Bishop told reporters Thursday. "Agencies should not be able to raise park fees independently, but I also have legislation to do away with all park fees so it's got to be somewhere in the middle of that," he said. "I'm insisting they have to have approval by us."

**Democrats oppose Zinke's plan:** That comes as 11 Natural Resources Democrats sent Zinke a letter Thursday opposing his plan to hike the fees at 17 national parks, which they said is "at odds" with Interior's mission to improve access to public lands. Link [here](#).

**WHEELER-ING AND DEALING:** Dropping Kathleen Hartnett White's nomination to run the White House Council on Environmental Quality would "help" the Senate advance Andrew Wheeler's selection for EPA deputy, top Senate EPW Democrat [Tom Carper](#) told ME. "I'm interested in seeing what happens to Ms. White and I think if the administration wants to continue to push hard on that nomination, I think it makes progress on Andy Wheeler more difficult," he said. Many in the Democratic caucus are concerned with Wheeler's nomination as well, though Carper wouldn't say if he'd oppose the former EPW aide himself.

**GOP TO PRUITT: WHAT'D YOU DO:** Three senior Energy and Commerce Republicans aren't pleased with Pruitt's [top 21 list of priority Superfund sites](#) and want details on how he crafted it. "Members specifically asked you about the list, and despite many of the sites included being of particular concern to Committee Members, we did not receive any indication from you that these sites would be included," [Greg Walden](#), [Fred Upton](#) and [John Shimkus](#) said in a letter. They also asked what Pruitt means by his pledge to have "direct engagement" on each of the sites.

**NRDC HITS COMSTOCK:** The Natural Resources Defense Council is launching a six-figure ad campaign within the Beltway media market over the holidays to hit Virginia Republican Rep. [Barbara Comstock](#) for her vote in favor of the tax bill that included a provision opening ANWR to drilling. Watch the ad [here](#).

**SWAPPED:** The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit said Thursday it would swap Obama appointee Judge Michelle Friedland for now-resigned Judge Alex Kozinski in the case of children seeking dramatic government action against greenhouse gas emissions. Remember Kozinski participated in oral arguments where the panel [seemed skeptical](#) of stopping the lawsuit at this point.

**TAKING THE NEXT STEP:** Pebble Limited Partnership today plans to kick off the permitting process for its controversial proposed gold and copper mine in Alaska by submitting an application with the Army Corps of Engineers, your ME host [reports](#). That'll kick off the review under the National Environmental Policy Act. But look for opponents of the project, including green groups and salmon fisherman, to continue to vigorously contest it.

**WAIT AND SEE ON TCE?** The majority of industrial entities are waiting to see whether EPA ever follows through on its proposed ban of the cleaning solvent trichloroethylene rather than phasing out its use immediately, according to [a report](#) from Safer Chemicals Healthy Families released Thursday. EPA has moved to indefinitely delay the proposed ban on certain uses of TCE.

**MOVER, SHAKER:** Catherine McCabe, who briefly ran EPA after President Barack Obama left office but before Pruitt's confirmation, will be named commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, POLITICO New Jersey's Ryan Hutchins [reports](#). She'll have the task of restoring morale to the department and honoring Gov.-elect Phil Murphy's pledge to rejoin the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative within 100 days of assuming office. They'll also be working to undo what they see as years of deleterious actions under Gov. Chris

Christie. "New Jersey's environmental leadership has been severely eroded," Murphy said.

**Anna Aurilio** leaves her post as director of Environment America's Washington office on Jan. 1. "I've been honored to help shape a growing movement to tackle the climate crisis and shift towards a 100% renewable energy future," she writes, adding she'll take a couple of months to plot her next move.

## QUICK HITS

- Future Warming Could Worsen Europe's Refugee Crisis. [National Geographic](#).
- U.S. launches effort to reduce reliance on imports of critical minerals. [Reuters](#).
- Shell, Seeking to Curb Its Carbon Footprint, Buys Electricity Provider. [New York Times](#).
- Pentagon's new defense strategy won't mention climate change. [The Hill](#).
- Shell and Eni will face the "biggest corporate bribery trial" over a \$1.1 billion Nigerian oil deal. [Quartz](#).
- Debate over new head of EPA's Great Lakes office. [WOSU](#).

## THAT'S ALL FOR ME

**\*\* A message from the Renewable Fuels Association:** The Renewable Fuel Standard, **helping to enhance U.S. energy security**, was signed into law ten years ago this week. Net petroleum dependence was 25% in 2016, but would have been 33% without the addition of 15.3 billion gallons of ethanol to the fuel supply. Looked at another way, 2016 ethanol production displaced an amount of gasoline refined from 540 million barrels of crude oil. Learn more at <http://www.ethanolrfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RFS2-Ten-Years.pdf>. #thankyouRFS \*\*

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